(Maharashtra), Cochin (Kerala), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Falta (West Bengal) and Noida (U.P.) converted from Export Processing Zones are operational. In addition, out of the 24 new SEZs approved for establishment (as on 31.3.2004), 3 SEZs at Salt Lake (Manikanchan), Indore, and Jaipur have become operational and another 2 Zones are now ready for operation. The new SEZs are being set up largely by the State Governments are their agencies or by the private sector in association with the State Government or by the private sector on their own. Periodic meetings are held by the Department of Commerce with the State Governments/promoters of the SEZs to expedite the projects.

Threat by France on WTO Plan

317. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) Government's reaction on the threat given by France to wreak the WTO's plan to revive talks on global trade pact;

(b) the steps India and other countries are taking to pursue France to fall in line; and

(c) how it would affect India's prospects at WTO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union responsible for negotiating trade matters on behalf of the Union in accordance with the decisions taken by the Council of the European Union comprising Ministers from Member governments and by the European Parliament. In view of this, the position of its Members is collectively articulated by the European Commission at the WTO. Threat, if any, by France as mentioned in part (a) of the question is not relevant in the context of WTO negotiations as it is confined to the decision-making process within the European Union. Further, since the negotiations in Geneva resulted in a Framework being adopted by the WTO General Council by consensus on 1 August 2004, the question of the stand of France affecting the on-going negotiations does not arise.

Review of policy on import of scrap

318. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the policies and procedures to import scrap to ensure that security of the nation is not compromised while encouraging trade;